



Bottle Feeding Infants

in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)



Special care must be taken to ensure the safety of breast milk or formula when bottle feeding infants. Use the following guidelines when purchasing and preparing formula, storing formula and breast milk, warming bottles and feeding babies.

Purchasing Formula

- Ready-to-feed formula is the most convenient and sanitary.*
- Make sure the label says “with iron” or “iron fortified.” CACFP regulations allow only iron-fortified infant formulas. Low iron or other formulas may only be served as a dietary substitute when a statement from a recognized medical authority is provided.
- Do not purchase cans of infant formula that have dents, bulges, pinched tops or bottoms, puffed ends, leaks or rust spots.
- Check the formula’s expiration date to make sure the product is not too old.

*If dry powder or liquid concentrate is used, it must be carefully prepared according to the instructions on the container. Adding too little water to formula puts a burden on the baby’s kidneys and digestive system and may lead to dehydration. Adding too much water to formula may interfere with the baby’s proper growth because it does not contain adequate calories and nutrients and can cause water intoxication. Instructions on using special formulas should be provided by the baby’s doctor.

Preparing Formula

1. Clean and sanitize the workspace.
2. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
3. Wash all equipment (bottles, caps, rings and nipples) in hot soapy water and scrub, using bottle and nipple brushes. Rinse well in hot water.
4. Disinfect bottles, caps, rings and nipples by boiling for 5 minutes in a pot with enough water to cover, then remove with sanitized tongs, let cool and air dry.



5. Before opening a formula can, wash the top of can lid with soap and clean water and rinse to remove dirt that could contaminate the formula. Before using, wash the can opener with soap and hot water.
6. Prepare formula properly according to directions on the formula container.
7. Add formula for one feeding to each clean bottle.
8. Put a clean nipple upside down on each bottle, cover with cap and screw on ring.

Note: Connecticut’s Department of Public Health licensing regulations specify that clean bottles shall be provided by the parent unless the center uses disposable bottles or has a dishwasher or dishwashing system approved by the local health director to wash bottles. Hard plastic bottles are recommended instead of glass bottles, since they are unbreakable.

Handling and Storing Breast Milk

- Breast milk from a mother is designed specially to meet the needs of her baby. Make sure that each bottle is clearly labeled with each baby’s name. Never accept an unlabeled bottle from a parent. Do not use unlabeled bottles that have been accidentally accepted.
- Refrigerate bottles immediately when they arrive and until ready to use.
- Use bottles of breast milk only for the baby for whom they are intended.
- To prevent spoiling, do not allow bottles of breast milk to stand at room temperature.
- Use refrigerated bottles of fresh breast milk, kept at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below, within 48 hours from the time they were collected. Throw out unused breast milk if not used within 48 hours. *(Note: While some organizations suggest that fresh breast milk can be stored for longer than 48 hours, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends a 48-hour period to assure safety.)*

Storing Bottles of Prepared Formula

- Clearly label all bottles with baby's name, and the date and time the formula was prepared. Bottles of formula should only be used for the baby for whom they are intended.
- Refrigerate prepared bottles until ready to use. Use them within 48 hours from the time they were prepared. Store prepared bottles in the back of the refrigerator (colder area).
- To prevent spoiling, do not allow prepared bottles of formula to stand at room temperature. Do not use a bottle that has been out of the refrigerator 1 hour or longer.
- Opened cans of formula should be covered, refrigerated and used within 48 hours. Throw out formula not used within 48 hours.
- Do not freeze infant formula.
- Throw out any unused formula left in a bottle after a feeding and rinse the bottle in cool water to remove formula. Do not reuse a bottle containing formula after the baby has fed from it. The mixture of formula with the baby's saliva promotes bacterial growth.

Warming Bottles

- For babies who prefer a warm bottle, warm the bottle immediately before serving by holding it under running warm (not hot) water. Warm only as much formula as you think the baby will need for a feeding.
- To thaw frozen breast milk, hold bottle under cool to warm water. Shake bottle gently to mix. Never thaw at room temperature.
- Always test liquid temperature before feeding to make sure it is not too hot or cold. Shake bottle well and test temperature by squirting a couple of drops onto your wrist or the back of your hand. The temperature is correct when it feels neither warm or cold.
- Never use a microwave to heat bottles. Liquid may become very hot when microwaved, even though the bottle feels cool, and could seriously burn babies. Covered bottles, especially vacuum-sealed, metal-capped bottles of ready-to-feed formula, can explode when microwaved.



Feeding the Baby

- Be sure to use the breast milk or formula intended for each child. Never use a bottle prepared for one child or another child.
- Gently and smoothly calm the baby to get ready for feeding. Feed in a smooth continuous fashion following the baby's preference for timing, speed and amounts. Avoid disruptions such as unnecessary burping, wiping, juggling and arranging.
- Older babies may be fed a bottle while sitting in a high chair. Always hold infants who are not able to sit up for feeding. Do not prop bottles for infants to nurse and don't let infants or toddlers carry bottles around with them. Propping bottles can cause ear infections, choking, and can also lead to baby bottle tooth decay.
- Hold baby's head a little higher than the rest of the body to prevent milk from backing up in the inner ear and causing an ear infection.
- Wait for the baby to stop eating before burping. Burp by gently patting or rubbing the baby's back while the baby rests on your shoulder or sits on your lap.
- Continue to feed until baby indicates fullness. Signs of fullness include sealing the lips, absence of suckle reflex, and spitting out nipple.
- Never force babies to finish what is in the bottle. Let them determine how much to eat.
- Do not let infants or toddlers carry bottles around with them. Babies who carry around a bottle can develop tooth decay, may drink too much liquid, and may share their bottles with other babies. The liquid in a bottle carried around for a long time can spoil.
- Only feed a baby while he or she is awake. Do not offer the bottle in bed at nap or sleep time. Allowing a baby to sleep in a crib with a bottle can lead to choking, ear infections, tooth decay or other dental problems, and problems with speech later on.



Source: *Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Care Food Program* (FNS-258), U. S. Department of Agriculture, 2002.
www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/feeding_infants.html